







LETTER

TO THE

AUTHOR of a LETTER

T O

Mr. BUXTON.

In which it is proved, that the Defign of that LETTER has been entirely mifunder-flood, and that the Author of it is the real Friend of

Sir EDWAR DASTLEY and Mr. COKE.

Aut Laudi Simulatione detrahere aut vituperationi laude.

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TO THE AUTHOR OF THE

LETTER

To MR. BUXTON.

SIR,

have seen your Letter at its first appearance in publick, I should long since have done myself the honour of returning you thanks for the entertainment it afforded me, and of congratulating you upon the same you have acquired by so ingenious and elaborate a performance. By this, Sir, we find, that in you alone

alone is centered all the united force of genius of the greatest men of antiquity: The accurate reasoning of an Aristotle, the imagery of a Plato, the irony of a Socrates, and the thundering eloquence of a Demosthenes.

But the talent which I would chiefly chuse to dwell upon is IRONY. A talent feldom feen in any great degree of perfection, but which shines forth in you with the greatest lustre. A talent you have fo happily exerted, as not only to persuade the friends of Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey, that you were the fincere well-wisher to, and defender of their cause, but even to deceive the Candidates themselves into the same belief, at the very time you were exerting all the powers of reason, and all the brilliancy of imagination to burlefque and fatirize them and their friends, and to defend the fentiments, promote the interest, and celebrate

brate the worth of Sir Edward Asley and Mr. Coke. A conduct so meritorious, a plan so admirably designed, so happily executed, and in its consequences so pregnant with benefit to the new candidates, cannot fail of entitling you to their best thanks, and of securing to you their everlasting gratitude.

Whoever is conversant with party writings must be sensible, that sulfome panegyrics and flattering encomiums, always injure the party they are intended to serve, and that unjust reflections and false invectives always serve the party they are designed to injure. You, Sir, to avail yourself of this circumstance, artfully chose the pleasing mask of irony; by means of which, you have with the utmost happiness, commended with censure, and satirized with praise.

Evident, however, as this point appears to me, many there are so infatuated with A 2 envy

envy, or misled by prejudice, that they would rather suppose you ferious than ludicrous, though the former supposition would stamp your name with an indelible difgrace, and the latter would adorn your brow with never-fading laurels. For upon the one supposition, how could they ever vindicate you from the guilt of running into idle declamation, puerile conceits, mean evasions, disingenuous assertions, evident misrepresentations, and manifest contradictions! Whereas upon the other, it is plain, that these are not to be considered as the faults of an ignorant writer, but as the beauties of an artful one, who introduced them only to colour the pretence of ferving a cause, which it was his intention to betray.

To establish this position is the design of my entering the lists; and conscious of the rectitude of my intentions, searless of all opponents, I shall boldly erect my BANNER of DEFIANCE. *

^{*} Vide (in the Tablets of the Memory) Mr. de Grey's fpeech.

So confident am I of the truth of the position I have advanced, that I dare even to venture the establishment of it upon the proof which your first paragraph affords. For you tell us there, that you esteem and reverence Mr. Buxton as a gentleman of Jolid judgment, distinguished integrity, and inflexible honour. Yet in your 22d page you directly contradict this, by telling us, that this gentleman has, (by forfaking Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey) forsaken the cause of virtue and of bonour. If then we were to suppose you meant the latter sentence seriously, you would be guilty of the absurdity of saying, that Mr. B. is at the same time a man of DISTIN-GUISHED INTEGRITY, and a man who HAS LOST HIS INTEGRITY, a man of INFLEXIBLE HONOUR, and yet a man whose HONOUR iS FLEXIBLE.

Can any one, Sir, who believes you capable of writing common fense, believe you

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could write fuch a glaring contradiction as this, did they not know that you only meant to expose the absurdity of those who blamed Mr. B. or any other gentleman, for forsaking Sir A. Wodehouse or Mr. de Grey.

But this contradiction, admirable as it is, is not the only one you are content to afford us in this passage. For if Mr. Buxton, (as you yourfelf allow us) has a folid judgment to distinguish who are bad reprefentatives, and who are likely to make good ones; if he has distinguished integrity and inflexible honour to act in confequence of the determination of his judgment; let the most unletter'd mind determine, whether the only inference you could mean to draw, be not, that the gentlemen whom Mr. B. has forsaken are improper, and that Sir Edward Aftley and Mr. Coke are likely to make proper representatives of this County.

You tell us next, "that the principal " thing always to be attended to, is, the " preservation of the public peace, and " that nothing fo effectually destroy the " public peace as a contested election." What an admirable ridicule have you here given us of the popular argument for the old members, which under a pretence of preferving the peace, would destroy the liberty of the county. For might not one as well suppose, you would feriously affert that there is no difference between a refreshing sleep and a lethargic slumber, as that you would feriously confound all diftinction between PUBLIC PEACE and PUBLIC HAPPINESS. Had you been ferious, and had you even never read any other history but that of our own nation, would you not have faid? That the principal thing always to be attended to is the PUBLIC HAPPINESS, though the attention to this, should even for a time DESTROY the PUBLIC PEACE. But the public public peace, which the adherents to Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey have done you the injustice to think that you fay ought always to be attended to, you tell us in express words immediately afterwards, ought not always to be attended to. "For " when the representatives of any place " are negligent of the important trust " committed to them," or when they are found incapable of discharging it, in either of these cases (you tell us) "it is the " duty of every honest man to exert himself " with vigour in opposing the re-election " of fuch unworthy members." How plainly here do you discover what is the party you really mean to ferve! And how extraordinary must have been the fascination which could prevent Sir Armine and his colleague from feeing it, when you make use of the very argument to justify opposition, which the friends of the new candidates have fo frequently urged in their own justification, and which can never be refuted.

Now

Now Sir, (to use one of your own beautiful methods of transition) we attend you to Ireland, where like

A fecond Thomas, or at once To name them all, another Duns

Having made a most curious distinction between ENDs and MOTIVES of Action, you proceed to consider the measures of our party, or rather the measures of some few individuals. Candidly and yet at the same time satirically hinting, (that as the leaders on both sides are answerable for the conduct of every single adherent) how much Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey have to answer for. Archly reminding them of the spirit of their party, and the vigour of their measures, in the removal of a certain amiable and respectable Nobleman from his attendance upon his Majesty.

You talk next with great beauty of language, of petulant and illiberal calumny, of

Lord Townshend, of Torrents, and of dirty freams difemboguing through his Lordship upon Mr. de Grey, and blotting his fair character with the deepest sable. The fineness of the colouring here is undoubtedly very confpicuous upon any supposition, but I defy the acutest critic to tell me the defign of the piece without the aid of my hypothefis. For you yourself ask, "what " has Lord Townshend to do with us and our representatives? What then can be your meaning? But that the fair character of Mr. de Grey is blotted with the deepest sable, which ever sticks to a representative, who owes all his support as a candidate for the house of commons, to a member of the house of lords. This hypothesis clears the whole.

So the pure limpid stream when foul with stains

Of rushing torrents, and descending rains, Runs itself clear, and as it runs, refines, Till by degrees the floating mirror thines. From From Ireland we attend you to St. Andrew's Hall on the day of nomination, where you almost entirely drop the mask, and speak, (pardon me if I say) almost too plainly that you went to support the nomination of the new candidates. For you tell Mr. Buxton expressly, "That the first thing that appear'd worthy of notice at least on your Part, (i. e. worthy of Mr. Buxton's notice,) was Sir William "Harbord's speech."

Now let common fense determine, when ther a friend of the old members would have passed over their Speeches with such contemptuous silence? Nay not only pass them by in silence, but affert by implication that they were not worthy of Notice. However prudence might have dictated silence in respect to Sir Armine's, can it ever be supposed that the same conduct would have been observed by a friend in relation to Mr. de Grey's? No, this is a subject which would

would have fired the collect breaft, and fertilised the most steril genius. Admiration herself would have ceased to be dumb, and eloquence would have flowed spontaneously from her lips. Had you been disposed to praise it, I conceive that you would have faid, "It was fuch an oration as I defy "the most bigotted admirers of the antients " to produce its equal. In it was united "the copiousness of a Cicero with the " strength of a Demosthenes. An oration " which for roundness of periods, justness " of reasoning, beauty of its tropes, and " aptness in similitudes was (to use the ex-" pression of Theobald) such an one as " none but itself can be its parallel. But let "me not in the warmth of my encomiums "on the oration forget the orator. " manner was as admirable as his fpeech "was inimitable. Such was the fpeech and " fuch the manner as would not have difgra-" ced Lee's Alexander or Brown's Barbarossa " A speech which unfortunately not being " committed to writing we cannot fay of it guad quod nec Jovis Ira nec ignes Nec poterat ferrum, nec edax abolere Vetustas.

"Yet we will be bold to fay that it must for ever remain indelibly imprinted on the minds of the audience. For can it ever be forgot, when the orator with his arm wielded aloft told us he would boldly erect his Banner of Defiance, can it I say ever be forgot, how the new candidates and their friends shrunk back affrighted. Just so have I seen a hen with her tender brood stepping into a barn to peck the threshed corn, struck with dismay hurry back, when she beheld the stail of the husbandman brandished on high."

Having now paid a just tribute of praise to Mr. de Grey's oratory, I am ready to accompany you in an examination of the speech of Sir William Harbord, that venerable veteran in the cause of liberty, that respectable father of as respectable a son. But here Sir I shall imitate your quadruple division

division, of Sir William's speech, and make a quadruple Division of this part of your letter. First, your satire against Mr. de Grey alone. Secondly, against Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey together. Thirdly, against Sir Armine alone. Fourthly, your encomium upon Sir Edward Astley, and Mr. Coke.

You begin your examination of Sir Wm. Harbord's speech with great pleasantry, telling us ironically, that Sir William said, that Mr. de Grey was upon the Decease of the late Lord Townshend, "nominated nowbody knows bow, and elected by nobody knows whom." Intimating with the most exquisite humour and the most biting satire, that it is but too well known, by whom Mr. de Grey, was at that time nominated, and by whom he was elected; viz. by a Junto of a few Families, I beg pardon, I should have said, a few noble families. Then after ironically celebrating Mr. de Grey as a great general, for taking

a town which could not refift, you humouroufly tell us, not that Mr. de Grey was on the death of Lord Townshend elected without opposition, which is literally true; but that he was approv'd of and elected by the united Voice of the County, which you know to be false. But which indeed you introduced with great Art, to recall to the remembrance of the friends of the new candidates, the DISGUST, which the MA-JORITY of the county shew upon that occafion, at having a Gentleman known but to very few forced upon them, because they had not time for an opposition. But the concluding stroke of your satire on Mr. de Grey is the finest of any, it is indeed the climax of the whole. I mean the motto you have chosen for that Gentleman's standard, DETUR DIGNIORI; taking only the comparative degree between him and his collegue, but leaving the fuperlative DETUR DIGNISSIMIS, as a device for Sir Edward Aftley and Mr. Coke.

In your fatire upon Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey together you seem to have outdone in facetiousness your own outdoings. For what you have said in answer to the dislike the true friends of Liberty have taken to see the Militia uniting as one body in elections, amounts to this; that Militia Colonels are much too barmless a set of gentlemen, to put us in any danger by unsheathing their Swords.

We come now to your satire on Sir A. Wodehouse alone. But great as I esteem your merits as a writer, impartiality obliges me to observe that bere you do not seem to have preserved your usual spirit of irony. For it is not sufficiently evident at first sight, that Sir W. Harbord's Objection to Sir Armine, was not, as you seem to say, "that "he had served us too long in Parliament," and that an bonour of this nature should not be bereditary in a family;" but, that he had been too long in Parliament without serving us, and that a trust of this kind should

should not continue in a Family, when, it has ceased to be an honour. It must be confessed indeed, that a little reflexion would teach us, your meaning could be no other than what I have explained it. For had you seriously meant what you seemed to say, and had you been really the Friend of Sir A. Wodehouse, can we suppose that you would have neglected this fair opportunity of enumerating the important fervices which he has conferred upon this County in particular, and his Country in general and the effulgence of honour which he has reflected upon his noble ancestors. Had you, I fay, been really the friend of Sir Armine, this you had certainly done, instead of praising the virtues of his ancestors 700 years ago.

You are too well read in poetry, not to remember,

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They

They that on glorious ancestors enlarge,
Produce their debt, instead of their discharge,
* * * * * * * * * * * * *

If virtues at his noble hands you crave,
Bid him not raise his fathers from the grave;
To stand for same on his foresathers feet,
By beraldry prov'd valiant or discreet,
Men should press forward in same's glorious chace,

Nobles look backward and so lose the race.

But it will perhaps be faid, that you have mentioned the fervices done us by Sir Armine, and the honour he has acquired by refusing honours. You do indeed tell us, that instead of Sir William Harbord's urging Sir Armine's long representation as a reason for discharging him, "it would have been more generous (plainly implying that you do not think it would have been more just) to have held him up to his constituents, as a man grown old in their service, as a man who for more than thirty years has executed this important

' important trust with unwearied attention, " difinterested sidelity, and unbiassed bonour; " unplaced, unpensioned, unennobled; no " ministerial ducats swelling his revenues, " no lordly title fluttering in his ear, nor " even a ribband or a star glittering in bis " eye." This indeed you have faid: But besides the ludicrousness of the passage I have already remarked, does not the whole plainly appear both in ftyle and thought, to be an excellent banter and fevere farcasm upon the bombast and fustian of modern panegyrics. For who that is a real friend to Sir Armine would talk fo pompoufly of places, pensions, and nobility; it can answer no other end than to suggest the real fast, not that they have been refused, but that they have never been offered.

Such a fuggestion would have been an unpardonable blunder, if we suppose you an adherent, but exquisite art, if we suppose you an opponent.

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We now come to the last head of the quadruple division. Your encomium on Sir Edward Aftley and Mr. Coke. But we will begin with that part of it which relates to Mr. Coke, as that flands first in your Letter. Of that gentleman you fay expressly, " When we consider this gentle-" man as honourable in bin: f.lf, bonourable " in his connections, high in the esteem of his own country, happy in the love of his neighco bours, and secure of his present seat in " parliament, he is defervedly the object of " our esteem." If this be not a strong recommendation of Mr. Coke, I thould be glad to be informed what is. Can it be supposed that a writer can give such a character of a candidate, and at the fame time object to him? Yet fuch is the glaring inconfiftency with which all have charged you, who have millaken your Letter for a vindication of the old members, and from which nothing can clear you but my fupposition.

position. But how implacably envious must they be of your fame, who think you could feriously mean to object to a gentleman of this character, " that because " he has an estate of some thousands a year " in another county, besides the hundreds " he has in this at prefent, and because he " must one day have the greatest interest " of any gentleman in this county; there-" fore it was ill-judged in him to offer " himself a candidate at this time." If there be any one who does not perceive this to be irony at first view, it is in vain for me to attempt to reason with him, as I must for ever despair of convincing him. Whoever does not differn this, must be as blind as one who should not be able to distinguish a star of BATH METAL from one of STERLING GOLD, or he must be as destitute of comprehension, as one who should mistake a despicable pun, for a brilliant bon-mot. *

^{*} See Page 6th of the Letter to Mr. Buxton.

· I now attend you, Sir, to make one in your tete-a-tete with Mr. Buxton. Be not ffartled at this Irith-cifin. You love the Irish too well for their compliments to their Lord Lieutenant, to be displeased with any thing in their manner. And indeed in this expression I professedly imitate your manner as well as their's. For you tell Mr. Buxton, " now you are alone " with him," (i. e. when you are writing to him in public) "you will give him your " fentiments concerning Sir E. Aftley:" which are in effect, that you honour him on account of his family, and esteem him for his own intrinsic worth. You add likewife, "that there was a time when " you should have rejoiced to see his inte-" rest rise in the county, at which time " had he offered himself a candidate, or probably be would not have been opposed, " most probably be would have succeeded." How happy are you Sir, in preferving the fame climax in your encomiums, as you did

did in your fatire. For you tell Mr. B. (in private indeed) that fo great is your preference of Sir E. Astley, to Sir A. Wodehouse or Mr. de Grey, that you wished him to have been elected a reprefentative of this county, though it could not have been effected, but by the expulfion of one of the prefent members, or by the exclusion of the other. You afterwards indeed reassume the comic mask, and fay, "as Sir Edward refigned his pre-" tensions then, ought he to reassume them " now?" Why not? If he was respectable then, is he less so now? If his pretentions were just at that time, are they not equally fo at this? Had you a claim on an estate which you did not chuse to prosecute some little time ago, would you think that forbearance invalidated your title now? Pardon me, if to a man of your quick difcernment, I appear too prolix upon fo plain a point. These questions though addressed to you, are only intended for the conviction tion of those, before whose eyes prepoffession has thrown a mist, which not all the dazzling beauties of your composition have yet been able to dispel.

In the beginning of your next paragraph, vou tell a gentleman of "diffin-" guished integrity," that he will perhaps make an "ungenerous reflection," + and fay Sir A. Wodehouse, did at that time desert Sir E. Astley, and that this argument is indeed his fort. Give me leave to add in confirmation of your affertions, that it is indeed an *unpregnable fort*. You then talk with infinite humour of Sir Armine's good understanding in foreseeing difficulties from an opposition to Sir Edward, when (as you hiad just before said) "probably be would " net have been epposed" And of his candour and friendship in representing to Sir Edward the le bars to bis success, at a time, (when as you had just before observed) "most probably be would have succeeded." Admirable

+ See Page 14 in the Letter.

Admirable burlefque on fuch uncommon friendship, and fuch sagacious foresight!

You tell us next, that Sir Armine wished not to embroil himself with his late worthy partner Lord Townshend. If this was really the Fact, "well might the indignant " fpirits of his honest ancestors (as you " have happily suggested) burst from their "tombs, and shake their venerable heads to " fee their descendant starting aside like a "broken bow, and become an INSTRU-" MENT in the hands of a Townshend and " a Walpole." So great is your propenfity to fatire, that in the midst of your encomiums on Sir Edward, you cannot refrain from discharging the whole artillery of your wit on Sir Armine and his friends. For can we suppose that a Wodehouse, a name once reverenced and almost idolized by all who were well-wishers to the liberty and independency of this county; can we suppose that ever any one of that family would

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be fearful of opposing the wishes of a Nobleman, by joining with a Gentleman of independent fortune, and what is better of an independent spirit, can we suppose that a Wodehouse would thus meanly crouch at the foot of nobility, and in one moment offer as a facrifice to this glittering idol the boasted independency of seven hundred years? Forbid it honour! Forbid it virtue! But why Sir, must Lord Townshend at every turn fall under the lash of your pen? His family, his character, is too respectable to deferve this treatment. And why should he be perpetually dragged like a criminal into the scene when you yourself ask what bas he to do with us and our election? Let him I beg enjoy in peace, the pleasing triumph of conscious virtue, the delightful reflection of having contributed to a nation's happiness, and the justly merited applause of a brave and grateful people for having fecured to them the charter of their liberties. Talk of his Lordship's admini-

stration

ftration in Ireland, we will break the shafts of fatire, we will filence the tongue of envy, and with one united voice we will hail his worth, and revel in his praises. attempt not to blast the verdant laurels fresh upon his brow, by infinuating that be who could thus nobly fruggle for the liberty of a country to which he was a stranger, would by nominating a representative, destroy the independency of his native county. Forbid it you guardian genius of Britain's welfare! Forbid it ye guardian angels of this once happy isle! and let not patriotism flying for ever from the fight of Englishmen find only (in defiance of Stamp Acts) a folitary existence in the wilds of America.

I will now Sir, return from this feeming digression on Lord Townshend, to your affertion, "that notwithstanding what has been said, Sir Armine did at that time promise to join Sir Edward Astley." And for the truth of this you appeal to Sir Edward himself

himself and Mr. Mills. Admirable humours exquifite fatire! For who doubts 'ir Armine's readine/s to promise on these occasions? Witness that very recent promise to a nobleman in a neighbouring county which cannot be forgot, and another less recent to a gentleman in this, "he who does good by stealth, and blush to find it fame," who is very apt to let things of this nature slip his memory. Indeed in respect to Sir Edward, Sir Armine did not show a readiness (as you yourself hint) but a backwardness to promise, for at last the promise was not given but extorted. With what delicacy therefore, and yet with what shrewdness have you vindicated Sir E. Astley for having no reliance on such a promise! When the manner of making it shew so plainly, that no other dependence could be put upon it, but this, that Sir Armine would with great readiness promise to Support the other party?

I now come to the remaining part of the disagreeabse task you imposed upon yourself." I mean the subject of General Warrants. But this you preface with such a character

as I hope is the mere coinage of fancy's brain. I am fure I know no person who deserves it. But though I can not judge of the likeness, I can not but admire the beauty of the drawing. I scarcely ever saw a finer burlesque on that excellent figure in Bathaan Rhetoric the Anticlimax. For you tell us that this Man " unawed by conscience" is likewise "unchecked by modesty." Amazing! But what is more astonishing still, that he is "unfilenced by conviction." A sentence not to be equalled for beauty of language by any one I know of: not even by that in which you tell us, "a contested election occasions the destruction of fociety," but what is to be fure more extraordinary still, the alienation of friendships "and feuds of families." There was a gentleman supposed to have been the Author of the Pamphlet to which you allude, one Richard Merryfellow, Esq; but one to whom your character is by no means applicable. A man who has much wit, but fufficient to adorn the best subjects, and to make even the worst of some consequence. But who has (except in a few cases) been so unfortunate in his choice of subjects, that our smales are frequently mixed with pain, and our admiration with disgust.

As to the subject of General Warrants, on which you have written so much, I shall fay very little. For you have with great pleafantry repeated again the arguments which have been pillaged from the Annual Register, which have been as constantly refuted as they have been frequently urged: Intimating by this happy stroke of art that nothing can be faid in defence of those who did not vote them to be illegal. You likewise happily hint, that as Mr. de Grey was not a Member of the house when the question of the illegality of General Warrants was debated, he could have no other reason for the Defence of a vote he did not give

give, but that he is obliged to defend the votes of a certain person in another bouse as well as his own. But the finishing stroke of your fatyrical defence of Sir A. Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey upon this subject, is, your declaration that they readily allow that general warrants are illegal and unconstitutional, and yet that they would have had an act of parliament passed to have made them so. If any man can be bold enough to affert that in defiance of common fense, you feriously intended this argument as a defence of the old members, I will give up the Point I have been labouring to establish. But surely every one who is not warped by prejudice or blinded by envy, must acknowledge that it is the most exquisite irony and most biting satire.

Having now Sir clearly proved that you are no enemy, but a friend to the present opposition, that you do not preser Sir Armine Wodehouse and Mr. de Grey, but Sir Edward Astley

Aftley and Mr. Coke, that you are not the defender but the oppon int of those who voted for General Warrants,-Having proved, that what has been mistaken in your Letter for fature is really praise, and what has been mittaken for praise, is really satire, that what has been thought burlefque, was intended as ferious, and what has been thought ferious was intended as burlefque ;-having proved that all your declamation is reasoning, and all your reasoning is declamation, that all your teeming contradictions are confiftencies, and all your feeming consistencies are contradictions, that your feeming mifrepresentations are facts, and your feeming facts are mifrepresentations, that what appear to be mean evalions are indisputable truths, and what appear to be indisputable truths are mean evafions; -having proved these points, I now Icave you to the full enjoyment of the good withes of the party you have so eminently ferved, and to the possession of the fame you have so justly merited.

I am Sir,
With the greatest esteem and respect,
Your most obliged,
and most obedient
humble Servant.







